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Message Text

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PAGE 01 QUITO 05566 092100Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 EB-08 IO-14 /042 W
----------018054 092128Z /66
P 091955Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9068

UNCLAS QUITO 5566

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO AID
E.O. 11652: N/A
SUBJECT: POSSIBLE AID SUPPORT FOR HEMISPHERE-WIDE SYMPOSIUM ON DEVELOPMENT

REF: STATE AIRGRAM A-2604

1. SUBJECT AIRGRAM RECEIVED AUGUST 3.

2. SUMMARY. EMBASSY/USAID VIEW WITH GREAT SKEPTICISM PRACTICAL VALUE OF PROPOSED ECLA HEMISPHERE-WIDE SYMPOSIUM ON DEVELOPMENT. BY ITS VERY NATURE, SYMPOSIUM WOULD HAVE TO CONCENTRATE ON MACRO-ECONOMIC HEMISPHERIC TOPICS FOR WHICH THERE ARE MORE THAN ENOUGH APPROPRIATE FORA. FOR COUNTRY SPECIFIC DISCUSSIONS OF MICRO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROBLEMS, WE DON'T SEE NEED NOR JUSTIFICATION FOR ONE MORE INTERNATIONAL EFFORT. ALSO WE FEAR POSSIBILITY THAT MEETINGS PROPOSED BY ECLA COULD EASILY TURN INTO ANOTHER FORUM FOR INTELLECTUAL DEBATES AMONG SCHOLARS WITH LITTLE OR NO RELEVANCE TO THE VERY FUNDAMENTAL BASIC HUMAN NEEDS PROBLEMS FACED BY AID TARGET POPULATION GROUPS. WE SEE SOME VALUE FROM TYPES OF MEETINGS PROPOSED BY ECLA; HOWEVER, WE DO NOT SEE STRONG CASE FOR INCREASED PROLIFERATION OF INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS AND SYMPOSIA. END SUMMARY.

3. FOLLOWING COMMENTS ARE KEYED TO ITEMS LISTED UNDER UNCLASSIFIED

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PARA 5 OF REFAIR:
A. NEITHER USAID NOR EMBASSY KNOW ECLA'S INTERNAL CAPABILITY; THEREFORE CANNOT JUDGE IT NOR ITS ABILITY TO EXECUTE PROJECT. WHETHER ECLA NEEDS ADDITIONAL USG FUNDING DEPENDS ON HOW IT IS USING ITS EXISTING RESOURCES. WE HAVE NO BASIS TO JUDGE THEIR EFFICIENCY IN RESOURCE UTILIZATION.

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B. IF DECISION IS MADE TO GO AHEAD WITH PROJECT,
WE SUGGEST NOT ONLY MULTI-AGENCY SPONSORSHIP BUT ALSO
CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES. SUCH CON-
TRIBUTIONS BY PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES COULD ADD
SERIOUSNESS TO THE EFFORT ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF VARIED
AND NUMEROUS INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS TO WHICH LDC OF-
FICIALS ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE.
C. FOR REASONS STATED UNDER PARA 2, WE HAVE
SERIOUS DOUBTS THAT THE ECLA PROPOSAL WOULD DEVELOP
INTO A QUOTE THINK-TANK UNQUOTE WHICH PARTICIPATING
COUNTRIES COULD TAP TO HELP IN ADDRESSING COUNTRY
SPECIFIC DEVELOPMENT PROBLEMS. WE ARE ALSO SKEPTI-
CAL THAT QUOTE OUTSIDERS UNQUOTE WILL BE ABLE TO PLAY
MEANINGFUL ROLE IN INFLUENCING PARTICIPANTS, WHO MAY
NOT EVEN HAVE POLICY FORMULATION ROLES IN THEIR RE-
SPECTIVE COUNTRIES, TO FACE AND ADDRESS DIFFICULT NA-
TIONAL ECONOMIC ISSUES.
D. WE BELIEVE GOE OFFICIALS WOULD BE AGREEABLE TO
PARTICIPATE IN MEETINGS. SUCH PARTICIPATION WOULD BE
CONDITIONED ON ASSUMPTION THAT ALL EXPENSES WOULD BE
PAID BY OR THROUGH ECLA. BASED ON OUR OBSERVATIONS AND
JUDGEMENT, THE GOE WOULD NOT CONSIDER THE PROPOSED SYM-
POSIUM AS AN APPROPRIATE MEETING TO DISCUSS THE COUN-
TRY'S BASIC ECONOMIC ISSUES, MAINLY SINCE IT WOULD BE
VIEWED AS AN INTELLECTUAL FORUM WHICH IS INAPPROPRIATE
TO RESULT IN SPECIFIC ACTIONS BENEFICIAL TO COUNTRY.
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E. IN OUR JUDGEMENT. PROPOSED SYMPOSIUM IS NOT
APPROPRIATE MEDIUM TO DEVELOP COUNTRY SPECIFIC STRA-
TEGIES.
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